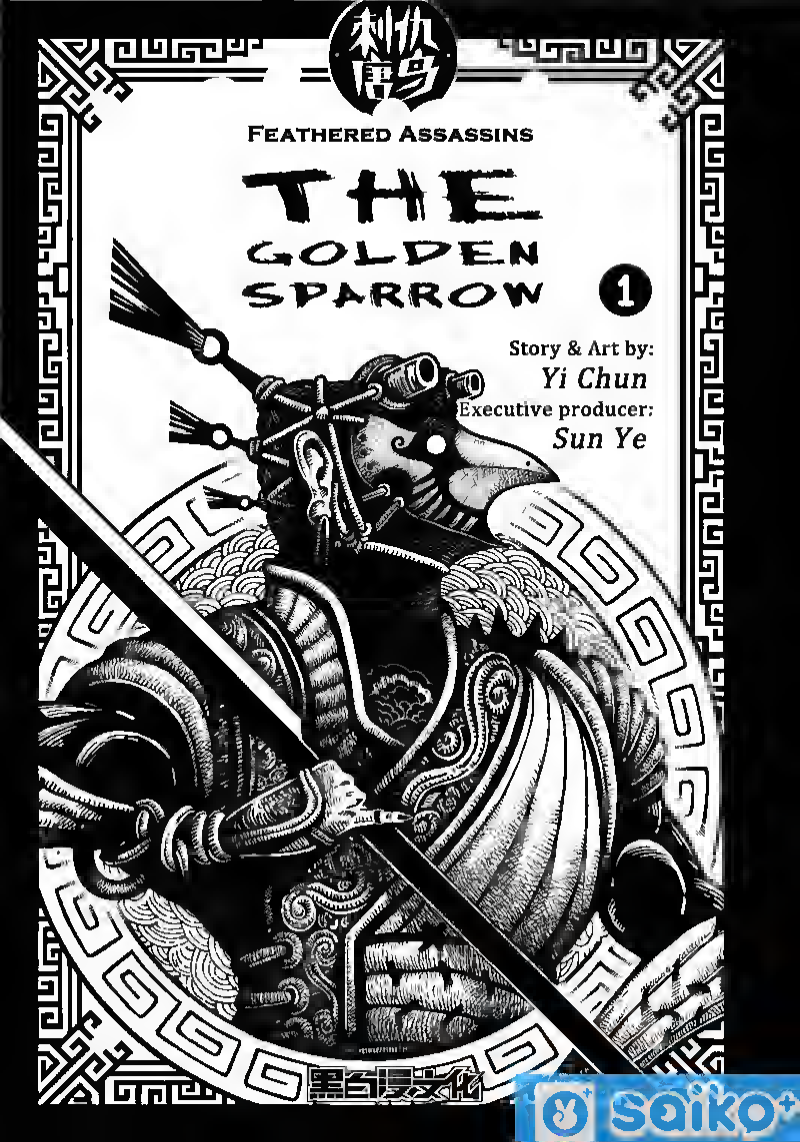
刺仇
FEATHERED ASSASSINS
THE GOLDEN SPARROW
1
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IN THE FTRST YEAR OF THE REIGN OF TANG YONGTAI, THE KILLER YAN PO CAME TO EZHOU CITY, ANO MASSACREO THE HUANG FAMILY.
NOT A SOUL WAS LEFT ALIVE.
THE FAMILY'S SHAPE SHIFTING POWERS PASSEO OOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS ALSO FELL INTO HER HANOS
BEFORE LEAVING, YAN PO LEFT A YOUNG GIRL TIEO TO THE BURNING BUILDING...

IT WAS A FIRE OF VENGEANCE.
THE FIRE WOULON'T STOP, IT JUST BURNEO ON INCESSANTLY.
AFTER THE RAINSTORM, A GIRL MIRACULOUSLY CLAMBEREO OUT THROUGH THE STIFLING SMOKE AS ONE FIRE WENT OUT, ANOTHER STARTEO UP FIERCELY.

TANG DYNASTY. THE NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF EMPEROR DAHE. CHANG'AN.
SEVENTY YEARS LATER...

THE IMPERIAL CENSOR – ZHANG JINGWEN'S RESIDENCE
OKAY
THE DAMAGE IS ONLY SUPERFICIAL, YOUR MUSCLES AND BONES ARE ALL OKAY. JUST GET SOME REST AND YOU'LL BE FINE...
IMPERIAL CENSOR, YOU'RE SIXTY YEARS OLD FROM NOW ON...
DON'T REMIND ME...
AH
.....
AH!
...

TOOAY I ATTEMPTEO TO IMPEACH THE PRIME CHANCELLOR LI XUN, ANO WAS SENTENCEO TO TWENTY LASHES IT SEEMS THE EMPEROR HAS MAOE UP HIS MINO
I BELIEVE IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE HE MAKES HIS MOVE AGAINST THE EUNACH YU
.....

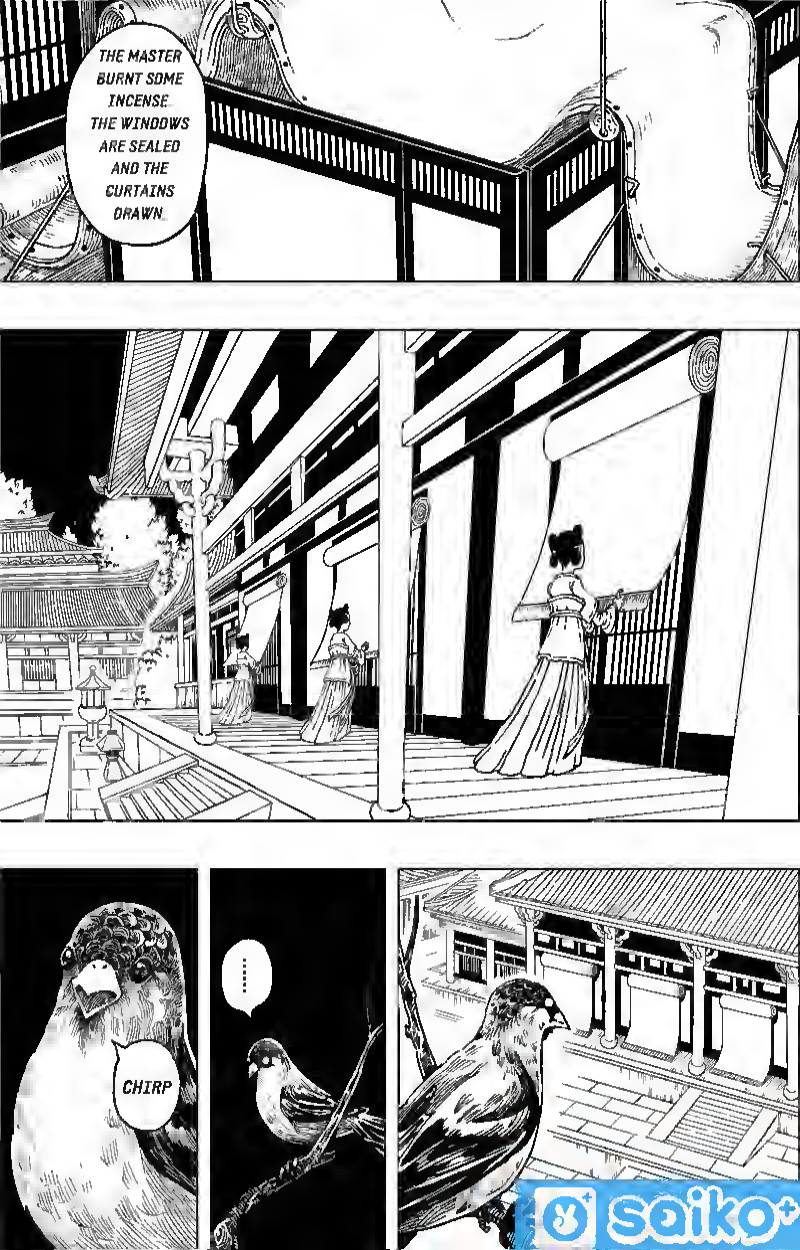
IF YOU WANT TO KILL AN EAGLE, YOU SHOULO FIRST CLIP ITS WINGS. I HAVEN'T MUCH LONGER TO LIVE..

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE GOLDEN SPARROW ?
HOWEVER, I'M NOT SOMEONE WHO CAN BE TRIFLED WITH THAT EASILY.
!
I IMAGINE LI XUN HAS ALREAOY OISPATCHED AN ASSASSIN FOR ME...

saiko

ONE MONTH AGO, A NEW ASSASSIN CAME TO CHANG'AN. HE GOES BY THE NAME OF THE GOLDEN SPARROW WITH JADE-GREEN ARMOUR AND A HIGH CREST, HE CARRIES A TANG SWORD SO SHARP THAT IT CAN SLICE THROUGH IRON WEAPONS CANNOT HARM HIM, AND HE MOVES AS SWIFTLY AS A GHOST
THIS MAN IS A PROFESSIONAL KILLER SEVERAL OF THE BEST FIGHTERS IN THE CITY HAVE ALREADY DIED AT HIS HANDS
HE ALSO HAS AN ABNORMAL HABIT
AFTER KILLING SOMEONE, HE PEELS THE SKIN FROM THEIR FACE AND HANGS IT FROM THE CITY TOWER...
HE THEN CARVES THE FOLLOWING INTO THEM:
I SHALL NOT REST UNTIL YAN PO APPEARS...
HIS MANNER MAY BE MONSTROUS, BUT THOSE SUCH AS HIMSELF HAVE EXISTED SINCE ANCIENT TIMES

I HAVE ALREADY SENT FOR HIM WHEN THE TIME COMES, "AS THE MANTIS STALKS THE CICADA, BEHIND THEM WILL LURK THE GOLDEN SPARROW"...
MY WOUNDS ARE HURTING. BURN SOME INCENSE TO SOOTHE ME
AT THIS TIME I NEED YOU BY MY SIDE.
HAVING THE FAMED WEST CITY DOCTOR HERE DURING THESE TROUBLING TIMES IS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE
THE IMPERIAL CENSOR HAS IMPORTANT MATTERS TO DEAL WITH. I SHALL NOT DISTURB YOU. EXCUSE ME..
DON'T GO!
!
CERTAINLY


THE MASTER BURNT SOME INCENSE. THE WINDOWS ARE SEALED AND THE CURTAINS DRAWN.
CHIRP
.....

POURS
AH...
HU...
HU...

DR...
DR. HU...
I...
FEEL...
A...
AHH...
I'M HERE!

HoHo...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'M THE CENSOR'S PHYSICIAN WE'RE FRIENDS
MUST BE THE KILLER SENT BY LI XUN!
AND YOU
BIRD... SO YOU'RE THE GOLDEN SPARROW ?

THEN, BY STIMULATING THE YANG AND HEART PRESSURE POINTS WITH A GOLD NEEDLE ONE CAN BRING ABOUT CARDIAC ARREST...
THE IMPORTANT THING WITH THIS MEDICINE IS THAT ONCE INHALED DEEPLY, THE OPIATE VAPOUR WILL START TO BRING ABOUT RESPIRATORY FAILURE...
ONLY WHEN YOU ADD THIS OPIATE CREAM, DOES IT BECOME OTHER-WORLDLY...
INCENSE AND INCANTATIONS ARE CONVENTIONAL MEDICINES IN THE WEST CITY, THEY BOTH SOOTHE AND CURE.
MEDICINE CAN SAVE LIVES, BUT ALSO TAKE THEM.
THIS METHOD LEAVES NO MARKS ON THE BODY. SUDDEN DEATH WILL BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE LASHES HE RECEIVED. THE KILLER IS INVISIBLE. IT'S TRULY MARVELLO...
POISON NEEDLE WIND!

WHIZZ
WHIZZ
ABSORBS
?!
YOU... YOU... REALLY ARE A DEMON!!

GOLDEN SPARROW
WING WHIRL!

saiko

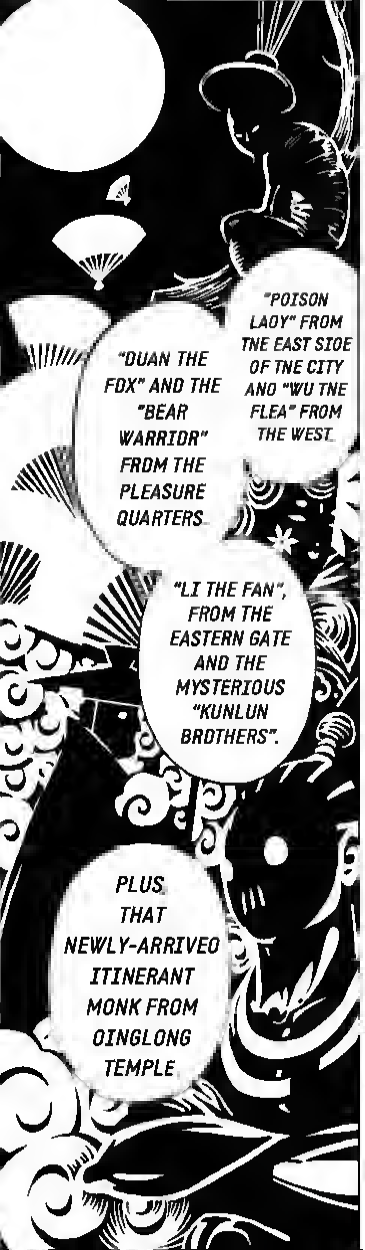
WHOOOOSH!
CLANG!
"THE MANTIS STALKS THE CICADA, BUT BEHIND THEM LURKS THE GOLDEN SPARROW"
HA...

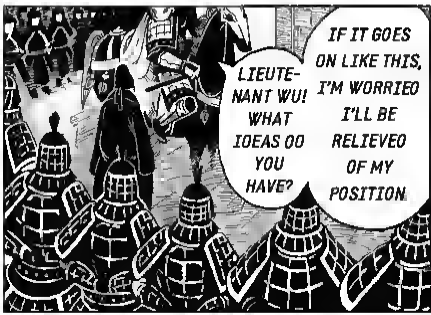
WAIT, YOU ASSASSINS KILL FOR MONEY! SPARE ME MY LIFE ANO YOU CAN NAME YOUR PRICE!
WHAT IS IT? A PERSON? A THING?
WHATEVER IT IS, SPARE MY LIFE ANO GIVE ME SOME TIME.
I CAN HELP YOU FINO IT!
NOT INTERES TED IN MONEY?
"I SHALL NOT REST UNTIL YAN PO APPEARS"... IT'S WHAT YOU WANT RIGHT? BUT WHAT IS THIS YAN PO?
.....

YOU TALK A LOT OF NONSENSE.
AH... NO... I'M BEGGING YOU!!

AH!!
!

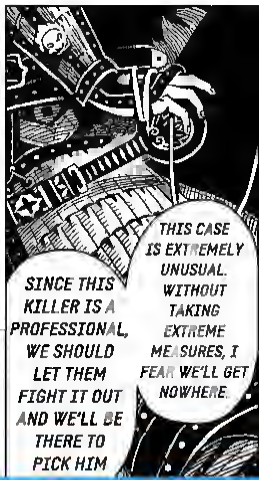
THAT'S THE SIXTH TIME THIS MONTH...
闇波女不出 誓不罷休
THE NEXT DAY. MINGDE GATE TOWER


"DUAN THE FOX" AND THE "BEAR WARRIOR" FROM THE PLEASURE QUARTERS.
"POISON LADY" FROM THE EAST SIDE OF THE CITY AND "WU THE FLEA" FROM THE WEST.
"LI THE FAN", FROM THE EASTERN GATE AND THE MYSTERIOUS "KUNLUN BROTHERS".
PLUS THAT NEWLY-ARRIVED ITINERANT MONK FROM QINGLONG TEMPLE


LIEUTE-NANT WU! WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE?
IF IT GOES ON LIKE THIS, I'M WORRIED I'LL BE RELIEVED OF MY POSITION.

LET THE CRIMINALS RUN AMOK GENERAL. THEN MAKE IT KNOWN ACROSS THE CITY THERE ARE PRICES ON THEIR HEADS!

INGE-NIOUS!
YOU'RE SAYING, LET THE CITY'S KILLERS AND THE BIRD DEMON...


SINCE THIS KILLER IS A PROFESSIONAL, WE SHOULD LET THEM FIGHT IT OUT AND WE'LL BE THERE TO PICK HIM
THIS CASE IS EXTREMELY UNUSUAL. WITHOUT TAKING EXTREME MEASURES, I FEAR WE'LL GET NOWHERE.

saiko

INSTRUCT THESE KILLERS TO ASSEMBLE AT PINGKANG MANSION TOMORROW EVENING AT SUNDOWN

AS THEY'RE FIGHTING IT OUT, WE PICK OFF THE BIRO. IT'S GOING TO BE A PLEASURE!